

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3175

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT UR

SUBJ: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENTS

1. DURING MIDDLE EAST CRISIS IT MAY BE USEFUL TO REPORT CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS REFLECTING ON SITUATION IN SOVIET POLITICAL HIERARCHY.

2. BOTH BREZHNEV'S PREEMINENCE AND COLLECTIVE SUPPORT FOR HIS POLICIES WERE EMPHASIZED BY PODGORNIY IN REMARKS WHICH SEEMED PARTICULARLY MEANINGFUL AT THIS TIME. AT CEREMONY ON OCTOBER 17 IN WHICH MARSHAL GRECHKO WAS AWARDED ORDER OF LENIN ON OCCASION OF HIS 70TH BIRTHDAY, PODGORNIY REFERRED TO GRECHKO'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO "HARMONIOUS, UNITED COLLECTIVE LED BY LEONID IL'ICH BREZHNEV." IN HIS REPLY GRECHKO ASSURED THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, ITS POLITBURO AND BREZHNEV PERSONALLY THAT HE WILL CONTINUE HIS EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN THE USSR'S MILITARY FORCES.

3. BREZHNEV'S MINI-CULT HAS FLOURISHED DURING RECENT DAYS BOTH IN CENTRAL MEDIA AND IN STATEMENTS OF OTHER MEMBERS OF HIERARCHY, INCLUDING POLITBURO MEMBER AND

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FORMER BREZHNEV RIVAL SHILEPIN IN SPEECHES AT WORLD

TRADE UNION CONGRESS IN VARNA AND OVER BULGARIAN TELEVISION.

4. IT IS WORTH NOTING CONTINUING ABSENCE FROM SCENE OF POLITBURO MEMBER AND MOSCOW PARTY FIRST SECRETARY GRISHIN, WHO MADE LAST PUBLIC APPEARANCE, ACCORDING TO EMBASSY'S RECORDS, IN MID-JULY. WHILE LENGTHY ABSENCES HAVE IN PAST OCCURRED, IT SEEMS PARTICULARLY UNUSUAL THAT GRISHIN MISSED OCTOBER 17 PLENUM OF MOSCOW CITY PARTY COMMITTEE. OF ADDITIONAL INTEREST IS FACT THAT MAIN SPEECH AT PLENUM WAS GIVEN BY V. N. YAGODKIN, IDEOLOGICAL SECRETARY OF THE MOSCOW PARTY COMMITTEE, WHOSE RECENT PRONOUNCEMENTS (AT IDEOLOGICAL SYMPOSIUM IN JUNE AND IN ARTICLE IN MOSKOVSKAYA PRAVDA ON SEPTEMBER 30) HAVE REFLECTED PARTICULARLY HARD LINE ON IDEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

5. WHILE THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT LEADERSHIP IS CONSULTING INTENSIVELY ON MIDDLE EAST, IT APPEARS THAT FULL POLITBURO MEETING HAS NOT BEEN CONVENED SINCE OUTBREAK OF MIDDLE EAST HOSTILITIES. EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THIS IS FOREIGN TRAVEL OF GRECHKO AND SHELEPIN TO POLAND AND BULGARIA RESPECTIVELY, CONTINUING ABSENCE FROM MOSCOW SCENE OF GRISHIN AND PELSHIE (EARLY AUGUST), AND INDICATION THAT NON-MOSCOW BASED POLITBURO MEMBERS ARE CONTINUING TO APPEAR ROUTINELY AT PUBLIC EVENTS IN THEIR FIEFDOMS.

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